

December 11, 1923.

Remarks by the President to Newspaper Men.

No decision has yet been made about the sending or releasing of General Butler for service at Philadelphia.

An inquiry about the Mexican treaty. That has been sent, I think, by my office to the Senate. It came over here a day or two ago. I think it would have been submitted last week had it not been for the recess. I am not certain whether it has been carried up yet. I think it has been. Of course, that would be released up there immediately on its appearance. I signed it here and sent it out, and it is just a question of when the messenger goes up. I suppose he has already gone. I do not think he could have gone up yesterday. I imagine he went up this morning at 12:00 o'clock. There isn't anything or comment that I can make on treaties that are sent to the Senate, other than the usual statement that comes to me from the Secretary of State. They are, as you know, secret in a way, and the injunction of secrecy can only be removed by a vote of the Senate. I think it is the custom to give out a synopsis by the Secretary of State, which the press has already received.

An inquiry about the requested assistance of the administration to prevent unnecessary and vexatious disturbances and interference with nominal radio broadcasting. That is referred to in my message where I said there ought to be more laws governing that. Any of you that have had experience with the radio, of course know that is so. It is as yet an undeveloped field, but one that our experience will very soon show the way in which it should be dealt with legally. I imagine it can't be dealt with so much by the hard and fast rules that would be made by statutory enactment, as by leaving it to the Department of Commerce or some other administrative body to formulate rules which could be changed from time to time as the experience showed was necessary and desirable.

The visit of Governor Lowden, General Dawes and William P. Jackson, the Committeeman from Maryland, ^{was} were for the purpose of paying their respects to this office.

+ No decision has been made in the matter of appointing a judge for the Eastern District of Missouri. I should have made those appointments during the recess, except for the opinion of the Attorney General that, as they did not occur during the recess, they could not be filled. It is necessary for me to confer with Senators in relation to these appointments, and members of the House, because it is to quite a degree the source of my information. There is another matter that I think the press

might stress somewhat, and that is my desire to appoint men of the highest character and most marked ability for service on the Federal bench. I am willing to have come to me - I welcome the suggestions from political committees and from those who are known to be in political life or holding political office about appointments to the bench. In other cases, suggestions of that kind might be almost entirely determined by them. But in the case of the bench I should look for something more than that. I have to have the assurance of the approbation of the bar, the assurance of the approbation of the general community as to the standing, character, ability and learning of men that are to be appointed to the bench. So that political recommendations, while they are helpful and will be given due consideration, cannot be entirely the determining factor in making appointments to the United States bench. It is of signal importance that those places be filled by men about which there can't be any controversy. I don't mean by that that I should permit a man that from all the evidence I could secure was perfectly well qualified to be disqualified because he happened to have some enemies that might be willing to resort to tactics that I could not agree with or didn't seem to be supported by facts. But it is very important to put on the bench men about whom there can't be any question, and I shall try, in my selections, to be guided by that principle.

Whether any decision has been reached regarding food aid to Germany by the United States. The general decision that I have already indicated, which is that we want that done as a business proposition if possible, and investigations are now being made and proposals are being considered, and negotiations are in process for the purpose of making a loan to the German Government, as I understand it, the proceeds of which would be spent in this country by the loans made, part here and part, I think, in Great Britain, for the purpose of buying food stuffs for Germany, if that is accomplished. I have great hopes it may be. I do not think it may be so necessary to resort to charity. Now don't say anything in the paper that would result in drying up the private charity that is being encouraged. I am speaking now of Government charity. It is very desirable that the private charity that is being organized should go on. It is under the direction of such men as Mr. Allen and I believe General Dawes, who is the Director of it in his region, and other men of like calibre, and of course we are very much desirous that it should go on.

Mr. President, is there any word from France as to her attitude on a loan for this food?

No, not that I know of.

+ I have here several inquiries that I will answer by reading a statement, so that there may be no misunderstanding.

+ This Government has been informed that the Reparations Commission is considering the establishment of two expert Committees. One to consider the means of balancing the budget of Germany and the measures to be taken to stabilize her currency. The other to take up the question of the capital which has been removed from Germany. (That is the property of Germany that is said to have been removed and which is now located in other countries). The inquiry of the first Committee would comprehend all the conditions to be realized and the measures to be taken to accomplish the results desired. All the representatives of the Governments, members of the Commission, have expressed a desire to have American experts on the two Committees. It is understood that the Government of the United States is not in a position to be represented on these Committees, and that the invitation to the American experts will be extended directly by the Reparations Commission. (That wants to be made plain - that the Government of the United States does not participate, but that experts, economic experts, to participate by the direct invitation of the Reparations Commission). This Government believes that the proposed inquiry will be of great value and in view of its direct interest as a creditor, (you may recall that I developed that somewhat in my message, speaking of the European debt that is due us and also the debt that is due us from Germany. The German debt in and of itself will amount to about three-quarters of a billion dollars - about \$750,000,000. We can't tell yet just what the Mixed Claims Commission may find is the amount due, but it is of such a sum as joined to the bill of \$255,000,000 that is due for the Army of Occupation will amount to about \$750,000,000. So that we have an interest there as a direct creditor and an indirect interest as a creditor of the other nations there), and of the importance of the economic recuperation of Europe, it would view with favor the acceptance by American experts of such an invitation. (We have the interest of our debt and our interest in the economic recovery of Europe). The immediate proposal before the Reparation Commission has been made by the French delegate and President of the Commission, and has the support, it is understood, of all the allied Governments. (The French delegate is the President of the Commission, and he is the one who has made the immediate proposal). The British Government has informed this

Government of its desire that American experts should participate in the inquiry. (That takes care of all the allied Governments.)

(Now, this is a very important addition). The German Government has also brought the matter to the attention of this Government, stating that it would be much appreciated if an American expert were to participate in the work of the first Committee, as above proposed, as it is believed that in this way important progress could be made toward the solution of the problems underlying economic recovery.

(You see, that makes the entire approval of the allied Governments and joined to that is the request that comes from the German Government. I think that is very important, of course, and a very significant development. There has been abroad many times some criticism of our Government, of our people, and our ways, but that has demonstrated, I think, that when they are in real trouble and real difficulty over there, they turn to us as a nation that will be fair with them, - one in whose judgment and in whose character they can rely; and notwithstanding differences that have seemed to exist, they are willing to abide by the faith that they have in us, and I think it is a very substantial accomplishment).

Mr. President, is this the carrying out of the New Haven speech?

Not exactly, but it is along that line. This little statement I will have set up on the typewriter and it will be ready for distribution for you in fifteen or twenty minutes.

Mr. President, would it be proper to ask, in view of our interest in the \$750,000,000, why we do not participate officially and directly?

Well, that is a matter that hasn't yet been adjusted. The Mixed Claims Commission is working on that, the mixed claims part. Then we have some adjustment of the bill for the Army of Occupation. I am speaking of that for the purpose of indicating our direct interest in the situation.